

ISAF Working Party on the Impact of High Level Sport on Youth Sailors

The Working Party met in Dublin on April 18th 2004. In attendance were:

Nucci Novi Ceppellini (ITA), ISAF Vice-President and Chair of the Working Party,
Helen Mary Wilkes (IRL)
Dr Frank Newton (GBR)
Dr Luca Ferraris (ITA)
Paddy Boyd (IRL)

ISAF Vice-President Fernando Bolin (ESP) and Barrie Harmsworth (UAE) were unable to attend

On April 17th the members of the Working Party attended a seminar arranged by the Irish Sailing Association entitled “Young People in Sailing”. Presentations at the Seminar included;

Long term Player Athlete Development	Dr Istvan Balyi
Physical Effects of Sailing	Dr Frank Newton.

1. PHYSICAL ASPECTS

The group considered the physical aspects of sailing among young people. The group noted that;

- Physical maturation varies according to age, race and gender.
- Growth spurts occur at different chronological ages
- Cognisance must be given to the effects of hiking and other sailing specific physical activities on the bodies of sailors

2. PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS

The WP are concerned that undue stress may occur among young sailors due to a number of factors, including but not limited to:

- Inappropriate coaching
- Selection pressure
- Unreasonable parental expectations

3. PRACTICES IN OTHER SPORTS

The working party looked at practices in other sports including:

Golf, Tennis, Equestrian, Mountain Bike, Snowboarding, Water Skiing, Table Tennis, Badminton. In all cases children younger than 15 were eligible to take part in International Competition and none of the sports excluded those under 12 from such competition.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The Working Party has concluded High Level Sport places demands on Youth Sailors and their supporters, but that these demands are not disproportionate and are, indeed, less than in many other sports. In particular drop-out levels from those participating in high level competition are relatively low and compares favourably with many other sports.

The Working Party found that the sport of sailing needs to consider its approach to youth sailors and in particular to take into account the following:

- Code of Ethics for Children in Sailing
- Coaching Methods
- Competition Formats
- Anti-Doping and the need for parental consent



- Age disparities between helm and crew in double-handed boats

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Working Party recommends that ISAF should develop the following guidelines:

- (a) A Code of Ethics for Children in Sailing
- (b) Coaching and Coaches Guidelines
- (c) Guidelines to MNAs on the psychological and physical maturation of young people

Submissions 054-03 and 062-02

The group supported the rejection by the Events Committee of both submissions and noted the reasons shown in www.sailing.org/meetings/minutes/2003_EC_12_11.pdf (Page 10) and www.sailing.org/meetings/minutes/2003_WYSC_09_11.pdf (Pages 5-6)

It noted that the 'Opinion of the Youth and Development Committee' shown on page 1 of www.sailing.org/meetings/2004midyear/papers/CO_6y.pdf (the proposal to introduce lower age groups into the ISAF Youth World Sailing Championship) was not in accord with the minutes of that Committee, and had been withdrawn by the Chairman of that Committee and replaced by the original submission.

